



MEDIA RELEASE

Firm up medical numbers, urges new president

Australia's medical schools are experiencing 'a perfect storm' of funding pressures, according to Professor Justin Beilby, the new President of Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand.

At the same time, a shortage of training places, challenges finding enough academic staff and uncertainty about the future demand for doctors have put extra pressure on the country's university medical schools.

'Our analysis shows that Federal Government's education funding covers only about half the cost of an actual medical degree, and this is simply unsustainable,' he said.

Professor Beilby was today elected unopposed as President, heading the organisation that represents the Deans of Australia and New Zealand's 20 Medical Schools.

He said Medical Deans was working closely with Health Workforce Australia in its review into future medical workforce needs.

'Currently we are unclear about how many medical students we need to train for the future, so we are keen to see the results later this year of a comprehensive review by Health Workforce Australia, which will detail the workforce planning needs through to 2025 in its National Training Plan.'

Until this review was completed, there should be no new university medical schools or school expansions, Professor Beilby said.

'There has been a significant increase in the number of medical students in recent years, and it is essential we do not increase that number until we have a proper, detailed workforce plan,' he said.

'We also need to ensure there are sufficient funds and sufficient academic staff to educate the existing student cohort and maintain the very high standard we have set in Australia.'

Professor Beilby, who is the Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide, reinforced the Medical Deans view that all graduates from Australia's universities – including international medical students - should have access to an intern place. A one-year internship, usually in a hospital but increasingly in the community, is required before a graduate can practise medicine.

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